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Austin Public Radio reaches as far as the first railroad crossing past Noelke Switch, 15 miles from Mertzon. The signal resumes at the cattleguard entering my front yard. Reception inside the house is strong and clear. Programs cover a wide range of subjects and music scores. On the nights high winds tear across this plateau, causing my old ranch house to creak and tremble to the same rhythm as a clipper ship at high sea, classical music, or even the bongo beat from an Austin group distracts from the raging weather.

Newscasts last over an hour in the mornings. Interviews are the main theme of the evening news. Being from Austin, environmental issues are common, much more so than on stations in the shortgrass country. After all, the broadcast is from the University campus, a hotbed of causes and youthful fervor.

Unlike the early days of families gathered around battery-powered radios on ranches, I don't sit down to listen. However, the other night, I had to sit down. A broadcast from a northeastern public radio station was interviewing a fellow who was proposing wolves be introduced to Central Park in New York City. In glowing terms, he described the playful and lovable disposition of wolves. He went on to explain how popular the park will become once wolves roam the grounds and can be heard howling in the evening. He proposed a restaurant and observation platform

be constructed on one end of the park so families could come and watch the wolves.

A few soreheads living close to Central Park were not so enchanted. One lady made it clear she wasn't going to be comfortable taking her two and a half year-old daughter to play around wolves. She sounded too upset to point out how real the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" would be where a child might actually get to see a wolf yawn and know what grandmother's teeth looked like to Red Riding Hood.

My son, living in Connecticut, says coyotes are so thick in the state that all owners ever recover from lost pets are the collars found on the golf greens and in the woods. The flea collars are lost, however, explaining the northeastern coyote's rich fur. (For sure, coyotes are collar-wise. Until the Texas Health department's massive aerial rabies vaccine program, coyotes in South Texas only attacked dogs wearing an immunization tag on their collars.)

But wolves kill coyotes. Where he lives is only two hours away from Central Park. One coyote male has already been trapped in the park, according to an article in the *Wall Street Journal*. Makes me think a share-the-wolf program might be initiated between the two states to control coyotes in Connecticut and heighten the excitement in Central Park by having a Coyote Festival and a Wolf Chase once a year.

The danger of the humane society or animal rights groups being able to object to a chase or festival is slim. I don't think a court would listen to a group cruel enough

to turn a wild animal loose in a city populated by 7.4 million people and visited by 20 million more tourists a year. Not to mention forcing the poor creatures to den up among the homeless people and the drug dealers in an 840-acre park, surrounded by the busiest streets in the Northeast.

Last month's Texas Wildlife Damage report made the news from Oklahoma seem the state was past needing an observation deck to watch prairie wolves up there. Under the heading, *Wildlife Services Around the Country*, came the following: "Oklahoma: a feedlot operator in Texas County lost 50 head of yearling cattle to coyotes last month. A Wildlife Specialist inspected the feedlot and was amazed at the abundance of evidence of coyote activity." The final note being the overlooked part of the cruelty of coyote damage: "Most of the cattle had to be destroyed due to their injuries."

(Texas County is in the Panhandle of Oklahoma. No data is available on whether cattle-killing coyotes honor state boundaries in the narrow space where Oklahoma divides Texas and Kansas, however in this writer's experience, coyotes have a poor sense of man's geography. For example, 18 sheep-raising counties in Texas might have 18 trapping clubs that their quarry lumps into one big feasting ground.)

The day may come when we hear the catchy phrase, "as cool as a New York gray wolf," or read a review of a play called, "The Big Bad Wolf of Broadway." Stocking Central

Park, however, is going to take more money than has been spent in Yellowstone and White Sands to bring back wolves. Keeping them alive there will be the marvel of the next century.